Press Information Bureau
Government of India
Ministry of Information & Broadcasting

14 MAY 2025 8:53PM by PIB Delhi

Operation SINDOOR: India's Strategic Clarity and Calculated Force

Introduction: Source URL: https___www.pib.gov.in_Pressreleaseshare.aspx_PRID=2128748&reg=3&lang=2

On April 22, terror struck Pahalgam. Pakistan-backed attackers stormed a village, asked people their religion, and killed them, resulting in 26 deaths. A clear attempt to incite communal violence, this marked a shift, from cross-border attacks to dividing India from within. In response, India launched Operation SINDOOR to destroy the terror bases behind the attack. But Pakistan hit back harder. Over the next week, it used drones and shelling to target religious sites. The Shambhu Temple in Jammu, the Gurdwara in Poonch, and Christian convents were attacked. These were not random strikes. They were part of a plan to break India's unity.

Purpose of Operation SINDOOR:

- Conceived to punish perpetrators and planners of terror
- Aimed to destroy terror infrastructure across the border

Intelligence and Target Selection:

- Carried out a microscopic scan of the terror landscape
- Identified numerous terror camps and training sites

Operational Ethics and Restraint:

- Operated under self-imposed restraint to avoid collateral damage
- Only terrorist targets were to be neutralized, avoiding civilian harm

During the first press briefing on May 7, India clarified its response as focused, measured and non-escalatory. It was specifically mentioned that Pakistani military establishments had not been targeted. It was also reiterated that any attack on military targets in India will invite a suitable response. Foreign Secretary **Vikram Misri**, across multiple press briefings on May 8, 9, and 10, laid bare India's plan of action and the full extent of Pakistan's designs.

India's Retaliatory Response: India conducted retaliatory strikes on Radar installations in Lahore and Radar facilities near Gurjanwala destroyed.

Ceasefire: Inflicted by this heavy damage, Pakistan's Director General of Military Operations (DGMO) called the Indian DGMO and It was agreed between them that both sides would stop all firing and military action on land and in the air and sea with effect from 1700 hours Indian Standard Time on 10th May 2025.

Pakistani Response after ceasefire: Even after ceasefire, Wave of UAVs and small drones intruded into Indian civilian and military areas. These drones were successfully intercepted.

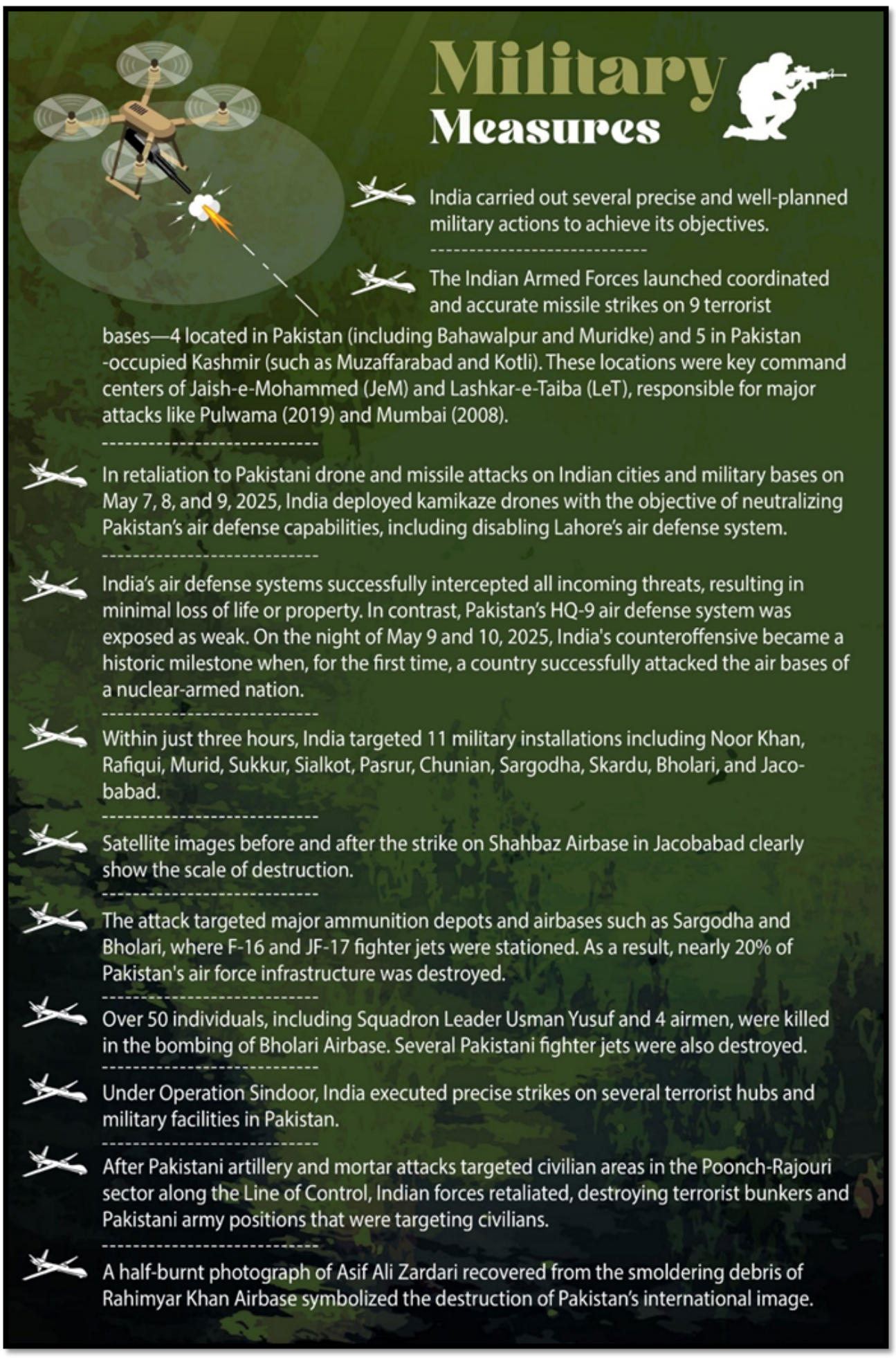
The Indian Armed Forces gave a befitting response to Pakistan's intrusion. Further, all field commanders have been authorized to take appropriate action in case of any ceasefire violation.

Additionally, being in the digital age, warfare transcends traditional battlegrounds. Alongside military operations, a fierce information war has been ongoing online. Following the commencement of *Operation SINDOOR*, India found itself targeted by an aggressive campaign launched by Pakistan- full of lies and misinformation. The aim was to distort the truth, mislead the global public and reclaim lost narrative ground through a storm of misinformation. However, India has been proactively responding and dissipating misinformation with facts, transparency, showcasing strong digital vigilance. Rather than reacting emotionally, a composed and methodical approach to information warfare was undertaken:

- **Highlighting operational success**: Operation SINDOOR's effectiveness was communicated with precision, focusing on strategic outcomes rather than sensationalism.
- **Discrediting sources**: Indian authorities have exposed the manipulation tactics used by Pakistan-based accounts, many of which are now under scrutiny by international social media platforms.
- **Promoting media literacy**: Campaigns to educate citizens on how to identify fake news have helped create a more resilient digital environment.

Pakistan Punished Through Military and Non-Military Means

Operation SINDOOR was a significant demonstration of India's military and strategic power, executed through a combination of military and non-military means. This multi-dimensional operation effectively neutralized terrorist threats, deterred Pakistani aggression, and firmly enforced India's zero-tolerance policy towards terrorism. The operation maintained strategic restraint while gaining international support.


Military
Measures
India carried out several precise and well-planned military actions to achieve its objectives.
The Indian Armed Forces launched coordinated and accurate missile strikes on 9 terrorist bases—4 located in Pakistan (including Bahawalpur and Muridke) and 5 in Pakistan -occupied Kashmir (such as Muzaffarabad and Kotli). These locations were key command centers of Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), responsible for major attacks like Pulwama (2019) and Mumbai (2008).
In retaliation to Pakistani drone and missile attacks on Indian cities and military bases on May 7, 8, and 9, 2025, India deployed kamikaze drones with the objective of neutralizing Pakistan's air defense capabilities, including disabling Lahore's air defense system.
India's air defense systems successfully intercepted all incoming threats, resulting in minimal loss of life or property. In contrast, Pakistan's HQ-9 air defense system was exposed as weak. On the night of May 9 and 10, 2025, India's counteroffensive became a historic milestone when, for the first time, a country successfully attacked the air bases of a nuclear-armed nation.
Within just three hours, India targeted 11 military installations including Noor Khan, Rafiqui, Murid, Sukkur, Sialkot, Pasrur, Chunian, Sargodha, Skardu, Bholari, and Jaco-babad.
Satellite images before and after the strike on Shahbaz Airbase in Jacobabad clearly show the scale of destruction.
The attack targeted major ammunition depots and airbases such as Sargodha and Bholari, where F-16 and JF-17 fighter jets were stationed. As a result, nearly 20% of Pakistan's air force infrastructure was destroyed.
Over 50 individuals, including Squadron Leader Usman Yusuf and 4 airmen, were killed in the bombing of Bholari Airbase. Several Pakistani fighter jets were also destroyed.
Under Operation Sindoor, India executed precise strikes on several terrorist hubs and military facilities in Pakistan.
After Pakistani artillery and mortar attacks targeted civilian areas in the Poonch-Rajouri sector along the Line of Control, Indian forces retaliated, destroying terrorist bunkers and Pakistani army positions that were targeting civilians.
A half-burnt photograph of Asif Ali Zardari recovered from the smoldering debris of Rahimyar Khan Airbase symbolized the destruction of Pakistan's international image.

Non-Military Measures undertaken:

- India's **non-kinetic efforts** played a crucial role in shaping the strategic environment and ensuring public and international support. Through **strategic policymaking, information dominance, and psychological operations**, India diplomatically and economically isolated Pakistan while strengthening domestic preparedness and global backing.

- A decisive move under Operation SINDOOR was India's **termination of the Indus Waters Treaty**. The Indus Waters Treaty of 1960 will be held in abeyance with immediate effect, until Pakistan credibly and irrevocably abjures its support for cross-border terrorism. This has far-reaching consequences for Pakistan, a country heavily dependent on the Indus river system for *80% of its 16 million hectares of agricultural land and 93% of its total water use*. This system supports 237 million people and contributes **one-fourth of Pakistan's GDP** through crops like wheat, rice, and cotton.
- With Mangla and Tarbela dams having only **10% live storage capacity (14.4 MAF)**, any disruption in water flow could cause catastrophic agricultural losses, food shortages, water rationing in major cities, and rolling blackouts. Industries such as textiles and fertilizers could become paralyzed. These shocks would severely impact Pakistan's already fragile economy, pushing it toward fiscal and foreign exchange crises.
- For India, the Indus Waters Treaty had long hampered infrastructure development in Jammu & Kashmir, restricting projects to run-of-the-river designs. Suspension of the treaty gave India full control over western rivers like **Jhelum and Chenab**, enabling construction of new reservoirs in Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Punjab, and Haryana. This boosted irrigation and hydroelectric power generation and transformed a diplomatic instrument into a developmental asset. By suspending the treaty, India sent a decisive message- **"Blood and water cannot flow together."**
- India **closed the Attari-Wagah border**. The Integrated Check Post Attari was closed with immediate effect. Those who crossed over with valid endorsements were to return through that route before 01 May 2025. India also **suspended all bilateral trade** with Pakistan. It halted exports of key goods like onions and banned imports of cement and textiles. This action severed the primary land-based trade route between the two nations, causing major disruption in economic ties.
- This suspension imposed immediate economic pressure on Pakistan, which was already battling inflation and debt crises. By cutting off these economic lifelines without escalating direct military conflict, India reinforced its **zero-tolerance stance**.
- Demonstrating firm resolve against terrorism, India **revoked visas of all Pakistanis residing** in the country and deported them immediately after the Pahalgam terrorist attack. Pakistani nationals will not be permitted to travel to India under the SAARC Visa Exemption Scheme (SVES) visas.
- **A total ban was imposed on Pakistani artists**, suspending all performances, screenings, music releases, and cultural exchanges. This restriction extended to streaming platforms, effectively erasing Pakistan's cultural influence in India.
- On the global stage, **India exposed Pakistan's terror infrastructure** and diplomatically isolated it.
- Collectively, these actions inflicted **severe economic and diplomatic damage** on Pakistan. They deepened its international isolation while powerfully affirming India's commitment to a zero-tolerance policy against terrorism.
- The Defence/Military, Naval and Air Advisors in the Pakistani High Commission in New Delhi are declared Persona Non Grata. The overall strength of the High Commissions will be brought down to 30 from the present 55 through further reductions.

Demonstrating leadership at a global level:

In the wake of this situation, a moment of national crisis demanded not just resolve but remarkable leadership. Rising to this challenge was Prime Minister Narendra Modi, whose decisive role in *Operation SINDOOR* marked one of India's boldest military responses in recent history. Despite being overseas on a pre-scheduled diplomatic visit, PM Modi swiftly assumed command, orchestrating a response that balanced strategic restraint with assertive action. He displayed remarkable restraint under immense pressure to react quickly and ensured that every step, from suspending the Indus Waters Treaty to military action, was well-planned and precisely timed.

- **Strategic planning and targeted response** underlined the operation's framework. Rather than rushing into an emotional or reactive strike, Prime Minister Modi created strategic unpredictability to prevent Pakistan or its terror proxies from preparing for retaliation. The

strikes were meticulously focused on terror infrastructure, and this clarity of objective was appreciated across party lines, including by opposition leader *P. Chidambaram*, who praised PM Modi for targeting only high-value terror installations, avoiding civilian areas entirely.

- Throughout the developments with Pakistan, **the focused objective against terrorism** remained unchanged. PM Modi stayed focused on delivering a firm and clear response. His consistent efforts against terrorism, viewed as a global threat helped India garner widespread international support. Under his leadership, India firmly established the principle that terrorism and its sponsors will be treated alike.
- With a **measured, yet powerful response**, it was ensured that no harm was inflicted upon on Pakistani civilians, despite repeated provocations from Pakistan. India's military actions were limited to terror camps and specific military facilities aiding terrorism. This careful targeting showed both India's capability and its **commitment to responsible warfare**.
- **Addressing long-standing concerns**, PM Modi's decision to suspend the Indus Waters Treaty was a historic move, not only harming Pakistan's interests but also benefiting India. He established a new national security doctrine: any future terror attack will be treated as an act of war. This eliminated the false distinction between terrorists and their state sponsors.

Addressing the nation on eve of 12th May, Prime Minister Narendra Modi made it clear that 'OPERATION SINDOOR' is not just a name but is a reflection of the feelings of millions of people in the country and an unbroken pledge of justice. He said, **"We remain committed to taking strong steps to safeguard India and its people. On the battlefield, we have always defeated Pakistan, and this time. Operation Sindoor has added a new dimension."**

Prime Minister outlined the following points in relation to Pakistan and cross-border terrorism.

- First, if there is a terrorist attack on India, a fitting reply will be given.
- Secondly, India will not tolerate any nuclear blackmail. India will strike precisely and decisively at the terrorist hideouts developing under the cover of nuclear blackmail.
- Thirdly, we will not differentiate between the government sponsoring terrorism and the masterminds of terrorism. We will continue to take decisive steps to protect India and our citizens from any threat.
- India's stand is very clear... Terror and talks cannot go together... Terror and trade cannot go together…. Water and blood cannot flow together.
- If there are talks with Pakistan, it will be only on terrorism; and if there are talks with Pakistan, it will be only on Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

What Operation SINDOOR Achieved

The results of Operation SINDOOR speak volumes about its impact:

Zero-Tolerance against Terrorism
9 major terror camps destroyed
11 Pakistani airbases hit
High-profile terrorists eliminated
Precision strikes using advanced technology

1. **Nine Terror Camps Eliminated**: India successfully destroyed nine major terror launchpads in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK), targeting Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammed, and Hizbul Mujahideen facilities. **Over 100 terrorists were killed in action.**
2. **Cross-Border Precision Strikes**: India redefined the rules of engagement, striking deep into Pakistan's heartland, including Punjab province and Bahawalpur, once considered out of

bounds even for U.S. drones. **India made it clear: neither the LoC nor Pakistani territory will remain untouched if terror originates from there.**

3. **A New Strategic Red Line**: Operation SINDOOR drew a new red line- if terror is state policy, it will be met with a visible and forceful response. This marked a shift from deterrence to direct action.
4. **Equal Punishment for Terrorists and Their Sponsors**: India rejected the artificial separation between terrorists and their backers, striking both simultaneously. This ended the impunity enjoyed by many Pakistan-based actors.
5. **Exposure of Pakistan's Air Defense Weaknesses**: Indian Air Force bypassed and jammed Pakistan's Chinese-supplied air defense systems, completing the mission in just 23 minutes using Rafale jets, SCALP missiles, and HAMMER bombs, demonstrating India's technological edge.
6. **India's Air Defense Superiority Displayed**: India's multi-layered air defense, including the indigenous Akashteer system, shot down hundreds of drones and missiles. This also showcased India's growing capabilities in exporting advanced defense systems.
7. **Precision Without Escalation**: India avoided civilian or non-terror military targets, showcasing its zero-tolerance for terror while containing the situation from escalating into full-scale war.
8. **Elimination of Key Terror Commanders**: Multiple high-profile terrorists on India's most wanted list were neutralized in a single night, crippling key operational modules. **High-value targets eliminated include Yusuf Azhar, Abdul Malik Rauf, Mudassir Ahmad. These individuals were linked to the IC-814 hijack and Pulwama blast.**
9. **Airstrikes on Pakistani Military Installations**: On May 9–10, India became the first country to strike 11 airbases of a nuclear-armed nation in a single operation, destroying 20% of Pakistan's air force assets. High casualties were inflicted at Bhoolari Airbase, including the death of Squadron Leader Usman Yusuf and destruction of key fighter jets.
10. **Coordinated Tri-Service Action** – The Indian Army, Navy, and Air Force worked in full coordination, demonstrating India's growing joint military prowess.
11. **A Global Message Delivered** – India showed the world that it does not require anyone's permission to defend its people. It reinforced the idea that terrorists and their masterminds can't hide anywhere, and if Pakistan retaliates, India is prepared for a decisive counterstrike.
12. **Widespread Global Support** – Unlike in previous conflicts, this time multiple global leaders backed India, rather than calling for restraint. The shift showed India's improved global standing and narrative control.
13. **Kashmir Narrative Reframed** – For the first time, India's actions were seen purely through the lens of counter-terrorism, with the Kashmir issue completely decoupled from the strike narrative. This was made possible by the precision and clarity of Operation SINDOOR.

Conclusion:

India's response to the Pahalgam attack stood firmly on legal and moral grounds. History will remember it as a principled and calibrated retaliation, shaped by leadership, ethics, and strategic precision. Operation SINDOOR has reshaped both the geopolitical and strategic landscape of South Asia. It was not merely a military campaign, but a multidimensional assertion of India's sovereignty, resolve, and global standing. Under Prime Minister Modi's decisive leadership, India demonstrated a new paradigm, one that blends restraint with strength, and precision with purpose. By targeting terror networks and their state sponsors with unprecedented clarity, India sent an unambiguous message: terrorism will be met with a swift and proportionate response, irrespective of borders or diplomatic complexities.

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